CHAPTER ONE

Sherlock Holmes has a Visitor

When visitors came to see Sherlock Holmes in Baker Street, they often did surprising things. Sometimes they put their heads in their hands and cried. Sometimes they talked and talked, and couldn't stop. And sometimes they just sat there and didn't say a word. But nobody was more surprising than Dr Thorneycroft Huxtable.

He was a large man, tall, well-dressed, and important-looking. He came into the room, walked to one of the big chairs, and suddenly fell into it. He sat there, with his eyes closed, looking white and ill.

I ran to get some water for him. Then I got my doctor's bag, and looked at him carefully.

'What is it, Watson?' said Holmes.

'He's all right, I think,' I said. 'He's just very, very tired - and probably hungry too.'

Holmes looked in the man's pockets - and found a train ticket from Mackleton, in the north of England.

'Mackleton - that's a long way,' said Holmes. 'It's not twelve o'clock yet, so he probably left home before five o'clock this morning.'

After a minute or two the man began to move, and his eyes opened. A second later he got quickly to his feet. His face was now red and unhappy.

'Mr Holmes, I am so sorry! I forgot to eat or drink anything this morning - that's why I felt ill.'

'When you feel better -' I began.

'I'm better now, thank you,' said our visitor. 'And I want very much to talk to Mr Holmes - to ask him something. Please, Mr Holmes, come back to Mackleton with me by the next train.'

'I'm sorry, that's not possible,' said Holmes. 'I'm working on two important cases - the Ferrers case and the Abergavenny case. I cannot leave London at the moment.'

'Important cases!' our visitor cried. 'But this case is very important too. You know about the kidnapping of the son of the Duke of Holdernesse three days ago...'

'What! The Government Minister?'

'Yes, that's him. So you didn't know... It's not in the newspapers yet, that's true. But Sherlock Holmes always hears news before other people, I thought.'

Holmes went to get one of his books, and began to read the page about the Duke of Holdernesse.

'Holdernesse, sixth Duke. Wife: Edith, daughter of Lord Grey. One child, Lord Arthur Saltire. Houses in London, Lancashire, and Wales. Government Minister for this... for that... for the other... Well, well,' said Holmes. 'He's one of the greatest men in the country.'

'One of the greatest, and one of the richest,' said Dr Huxtable. 'I know, Mr Holmes, that you don't work for money, but I must tell you this. The Duke is offering five thousand pounds for news of his son, and another one thousand pounds for the name of his kidnapper.'

'That,' said Holmes, 'is a most interesting offer.' He looked at me. 'Watson, I think we are going with Dr Huxtable back to the north of England this afternoon.'

Holmes then looked at Dr Huxtable. 'Now, sir, tell me everything. What happened? When did it happen? How did it happen? And why does Dr Thorneycroft Huxtable come to ask for my help three days later?'

Our visitor drank some water, and began his story.

CHAPTER TWO

Dr Huxtable's Story

'My school - the Priory School near Mackleton - is the best school for young boys in England,' began Dr Huxtable. 'We have the sons of Lord Soames, Lord Lever, and of many other important people. Three weeks ago Mr James Wilder, the Duke of Holdernesse's secretary, came to see me. The Duke, he said, wanted to send his son, the ten-year-old Lord Saltire, to my school.

'On the 1st of May young Lord Saltire arrived. He's a nice boy, and he soon began to like school life and to make friends. His life at home, you see, was not very happy - we all know about the Duke and his wife. The Duchess, of course, now lives in the south of France. She left the Duke about three months ago, I think. But the boy loved his mother, and was very unhappy when she left. Because of this, the Duke sent him to my school. And after two weeks with us, he was much happier.

'Then, on the night of the 13th of May, he disappeared. The way to his bedroom is through another, larger room. Two older boys sleep there. One of them never sleeps very well, and he heard and saw nothing that night. So young Arthur did

not go out through that room. His window was open, and there is ivy all up the wall of the house. It is easy to get out of the window and down the ivy to the ground. So we think that he went out that way.

'He was in his usual school things, we think - a short black coat and dark blue trousers. We looked all through his room very carefully, but we found nothing strange, nothing unusual.

'When I learnt the news at seven o'clock on Tuesday morning, I called everybody into the big schoolroom. Then we learnt more bad news - Heidegger, the German teacher, was missing too. His room is not far from Arthur's room. Heidegger went down the ivy - we know this because we found his footprints on the ground under the window. We know, too, that he was only in his coat, trousers, and shoes, because we found his shirt and his socks on the floor of his room. And he took his bicycle with him.

'Heidegger came to the school a year ago. He's a good teacher, but the boys don't like him because he isn't very friendly.

'So, Mr Holmes, we have two missing people. It's now Thursday, and there's still no news of them.'

Holmes took out a little notebook, and began to write things down.

'The boy didn't go home, of course,' he said.

'No, no. We asked at Holdernesse Hall at once,' said Dr Huxtable. 'The Duke is very afraid for his son - and I am the unhappiest man in England. Mr Holmes, you are a famous detective - please help me!'

'You make things very difficult for me,' Holmes said. 'How can I find marks in the ivy or on the ground after three days? Why didn't you come to me at once?'

'Because of the Duke,' Dr Huxtable said. 'He doesn't like people talking about his unhappy family life.'

'And what are the police doing?'

'Well, they heard about a boy and a young man at the station early on Tuesday. They looked for them, and last night they found them in Liverpool - but it was a man and his son going to visit a friend. We lost three days because of that. And last night I couldn't sleep, so I took the first train down to London this morning.'

'Well, Dr Huxtable, some more questions,' said Holmes. 'Did the boy take German lessons?'

'No.'

'So he didn't know the German teacher well, then.'

'He probably never spoke to him,' said Dr Huxtable.

'Mmm,' said Holmes. 'Does the boy have a bicycle?'

'No.'

'Was any other bicycle missing?'

'No.'

'So. Did the German teacher ride away on his bicycle in the night, with the boy on his back? I don't think so. But what happened to the bicycle? Now, what about visitors? Did the boy have any visitors the day before?'

'No.'

'Did he get any letters?'

'Yes, one letter. From his father.'

'Do you open the boys' letters, Dr Huxtable?'

'No.'

'Then how do you know that the letter was from the father?'

'I know the Duke's handwriting. And he says that he wrote a letter to his son.'

'Did the boy get any letters from France?'

'No, I never saw any.'

'Do you understand me, Dr Huxtable?' Holmes said. 'Did someone take the boy away, or did the

boy go freely? - because he had a letter from France perhaps.'

'I don't know,' said Dr Huxtable. 'He only had letters from his father, I think.'

'Were father and son very friendly?'

'The Duke is not... er... not a very friendly man, Mr Holmes. He's not a bad father, but he is a Government Minister and has a lot of things to do.'

'So the boy felt more friendly to his mother?'

'Yes.'

'Did he say that?'

'No.'

'Did the Duke tell you, then?'

'Oh no! The Duke never talks about things like that.'

'So how do you know?'

'Mr James Wilder, the Duke's secretary, told me.'

'I see,' said Holmes. 'That last letter of the Duke's - where is it now?'

'The boy took it with him,' Dr Huxtable said. 'It's not in his room. Mr Holmes - our train leaves in half an hour.'

'Right,' said Holmes. He looked at me. 'Watson, let's get ready and go off to the north

with Dr Huxtable. Perhaps we can find some answers to this mystery.'

CHAPTER THREE

Holmes and Watson Go North

It was dark when we arrived at Dr Huxtable's famous school in the northern hills. We went quickly into the building out of the cold, and at once someone ran up with news for Dr Huxtable.

He looked very surprised. 'The Duke is here,' he told us. 'The Duke and Mr Wilder, his secretary, are in my office. Come and meet them.'

The Government Minister was a tall man with a long, thin face. He had red hair, and a great red beard. He looked at us, and did not smile. Next to him stood Mr Wilder, a very young man. He was small, with blue eyes, and a watchful face. He spoke first.

'The Duke is surprised, Dr Huxtable, to see Mr Sherlock Holmes here. He doesn't want people to know about this. You know that, so why didn't you speak to the Duke before you went to London?'

'But we need help,' said Dr Huxtable. 'And I -'

'Well,' said the Duke. 'Mr Holmes is here now, and perhaps he can help us.' He looked at Holmes. 'I'd like you to come and stay at Holdernesse Hall, Mr Holmes.'

'Thank you, sir,' said Holmes. 'But I would like to stay near to the mystery, here at the school. Can I ask you one or two questions, perhaps?'

'Of course,' said the Duke.

'My questions are about the Duchess, and about money,' said Holmes.

'The Duchess knows nothing about this,' said the Duke, 'and nobody is asking me for money.'

'I see,' said Holmes. 'You wrote a letter to your son before he disappeared. When did you post it?'

'Post it?' said Mr Wilder angrily. 'The Duke does not post letters. I put the letter into the postbag, with all the other letters that day.'

A minute or two later the Duke and Mr Wilder left. Holmes then began at once to work on the case. We looked carefully all through the boy's bedroom, and the German teacher's room. We looked at the ivy on the wall, and we saw the footprints under the German teacher's window. But we learnt nothing new. Holmes then left the house, and only came back after eleven o'clock.

He had with him a large map. He brought it into my room and put it on the bed.

'This case is beginning to get interesting, Watson,' he said. 'Look at this map. Here is the school, you see, and here is the road. So, did the

boy and the teacher go along the road when they left? No, Watson, they did not!'

'How do you know that, Holmes?' I asked.

'Because there was a policeman here - look. He was there from midnight to six in the morning, and he saw nobody on the road. I spoke to him this evening. And here at the other end, you see, is the White Horse Inn. A woman there was ill, and the family watched the road all night, waiting for the doctor. The doctor didn't come until the morning, and the family saw nobody on the road. So the boy and the teacher did not go by road.'

'But, Holmes, what about the bicycle?' I asked.

'Yes, Watson, we must remember the bicycle, of course. But first, let's look to the south and the north. To the south we have a big river - no bicycles there, then. And to the north we have the trees, called Ragged Shaw, and then a great moor, the Lower Gill Moor. And here is Holdernesse Hall, sixteen kilometres from the school by road, but only nine kilometres across the moor. No other houses, until the Green Man Inn, along the Chesterfield road.'

'But the bicycle?' I said again.

'Yes, yes, Watson!' Holmes said. 'It is possible to ride a bicycle across the moor - difficult, but possible.'

Just then Dr Huxtable came quickly into the room. 'News, Mr Holmes!' he said excitedly. 'I bring news!' In his hands was a blue school hat. 'Look - this is the boy's hat. One of my gardeners found it this evening.'

'Where, man, where?' asked Holmes.

'Just north of Ragged Shaw,' said Dr Huxtable.

'Aha!' said Holmes. 'What did I tell you, Watson? Tomorrow we must walk north, across the moor.'

CHAPTER FOUR

The Body on the Moor

Very early the next morning I opened my eyes, and saw Holmes next to my bed. He was already dressed.

'Come, Watson,' he cried. 'There is hot coffee ready for you. We leave in ten minutes.'

By six o'clock we were through Ragged Shaw, and half an hour later we were on Lower Gill Moor. Across the middle of the moor was a small river, and the ground all around it was very wet.

'We can easily see tracks in this wet ground,' said Holmes. 'Look carefully, Watson!'

We moved slowly across the moor, looking at every centimetre of mud. We found hundreds of sheep tracks, and some cow tracks - but no bicycle tracks. And then at last, we found something. Not far from the little river, right across some nice black mud, was the track of a bicycle.

'Hurrah!' I cried. 'We have it.'

But Holmes did not look happy. 'It's a bicycle, yes, but not the bicycle. Every bicycle has different tyres - I know forty-two different kinds of

tyre. This tyre is a Dunlop, but Heidegger's bicycle had Palmer tyres. The English teacher told me that. So this is not Heidegger.'

'Is it the boy, then?' I asked.

'Probably not. The boy didn't take a bicycle with him,' said Holmes. He looked again at the track in the mud. 'This track is going away from the school.'

'Or perhaps to the school?' I said.

'No, no, my dear Watson. Look at the tracks of the two tyres. Are they the same?'

'Er, no,' I said. 'One tyre makes a deeper track.'

'And that's the back wheel,' said Holmes, 'because the rider, of course, sits over the back wheel. The deeper track is the one on top, so this bicycle went that way, across the moor away from the school. But who was the rider? Where did he come from?'

We followed the Dunlop track back, nearly to Ragged Shaw. Then we lost it, in some cow tracks. Holmes sat down and thought for some minutes.

'No,' he said, getting up. 'We must leave this question for now. Back to the mud by the river, Watson!'

Two hours later Holmes gave a happy cry. I quickly ran over to him, and looked down at a long thin track in the mud. It was the Palmer tyre.

'Here is Heidegger!' cried Holmes. 'Let's follow him, Watson.'

For a kilometre or more we followed the Palmer tyre north across the moor, losing the track, finding it again, losing it, and finding it. Suddenly, the track stopped.

'What happened here?' I said. 'Did he fall?'

Holmes looked carefully on the ground. Then he moved to some small bushes with yellow flowers on them. 'Look,' he said quietly.

On one of the yellow flowers there was something red - the dark, browny-red of blood.

'Bad!' said Holmes. 'Bad! What do I read here? Something or someone hit him. He fell, he stood up, he got onto his bicycle again, and rode away. But there is no other track. Some cow tracks here, but no footprints. We must follow the blood, Watson.'

We soon found the bicycle, and then behind a bush we saw a shoe, and found a body. There was blood on the man's head and face, and he was very, very dead. He had shoes on, but no socks, and we saw a night-shirt under his open coat. It was the German teacher.

'Poor man,' Holmes said quietly. 'What shall we do, Watson? We can't lose any more time, but we must tell someone about this poor man.'

'Shall I run back to the school?' I said.

'No, I need you with me.' Holmes stood up and looked around. 'Look!' he said. 'There's a workman over there. He can go back to the school for us.'

I went and got the workman, and Holmes wrote a note for Dr Huxtable. The poor workman took one look at the body, and began to run quickly down the hill to Ragged Shaw.

'Now,' said Holmes, 'before we go on, let's think carefully for a minute. What do we know so far? First, the boy left freely. He was dressed, he did not leave suddenly, he wanted to go - perhaps with someone, perhaps not. But the German teacher left without his socks and without his shirt, so he left very suddenly.'

'That's right,' I said.

'And why did Heidegger go? Because, from his bedroom window, he saw the boy. Because he wanted to follow him and bring him back. So far, so good. But why doesn't Heidegger just run after the boy? A man can easily run faster than a boy - but Heidegger doesn't do this. He gets his bicycle. He knows that he needs his bicycle. Why?'

'Ah,' I said, 'because the boy has a bicycle.'

'Not so fast, Watson. Think about it. Heidegger dies eight kilometres from the school. So the boy is moving very fast, because it is eight kilometres before a man on a bicycle can get near him. And Heidegger dies because someone hits him very hard on the head. A boy can't do that, so there was someone with the boy - a man, let's say. But we looked very carefully at the mud all round poor Heidegger's body, Watson, and what did we find? Some cow tracks, but nothing more. No footprints from people, no bicycle tracks.'

'Holmes,' I cried. 'This is not possible.'

'Very good, Watson,' he said. 'It's not possible, so something is wrong with my thinking. What can it be?'

'Perhaps,' I said, 'Heidegger broke his head in a fall?'

'In mud, Watson?'

'Oh, I don't know, I just don't know.'

'Come, come, Watson,' said Holmes. 'Every mystery has an answer. But for now, the Palmer tyre can tell us nothing more, so we must go back to the Dunlop tyre.'

We found the Dunlop track again and followed it north. Here there was very little mud, and we lost the track. Across the moor we could now see

Holdernesse Hall, some kilometres to our left, and in front of us we could see the Chesterfield road. We walked down to the road, and along to the Green Man Inn.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Visit to the Green Man

When we were near the inn, Holmes suddenly cried out.

'Aaah! My foot! I can't stand on it. Help me, Watson.'

I took his arm, and we walked slowly to the door of the inn. A man stood there, smoking, and watching us.

'How are you, Mr Reuben Hayes?' said Holmes.

'Who are you, and how do you know my name?' said the man. He looked very unfriendly.

'Because it's on the door of the inn, over your head,' said Holmes. 'But can you help me, Mr Hayes?'

'No, I can't.'

'But I need help. I can't put my foot to the ground.'

'Well, don't put it to the ground.'

Holmes smiled. 'Look,' he said. 'It's very important, and

I can offer you a pound for the use of a bicycle.'

'Where do you want to go?' asked Mr Hayes.

'To Holdernesse Hall.'

'Oh, friends of the Duke, are you?' Mr Hayes laughed, looking at our muddy shoes and trousers.

Holmes laughed too. 'Well, we are bringing him news of his lost son,' he said. 'The boy is in Liverpool.'

Mr Hayes's face went white, then red. 'Oh,' he said carefully. 'That's... er, that's good news. I worked for the Duke once, but he wasn't good to me. I don't like him, but I'm pleased about the boy.'

We all went into the inn. 'Now,' said Holmes, 'something to eat first, please. Then you can bring round the bicycle.'

'I haven't got a bicycle,' said Mr Hayes.

Holmes put a pound on the table.

'I tell you, man, that I haven't got a bicycle! You can have two horses to take you to the Hall.'

He brought us something to eat, and we ate hungrily. Through the window we could see the stables at the back of the inn. Once Holmes got up and walked round the room, then stood, looking

out of the window at the stables. Surprisingly, his foot was now very much better.

Suddenly he laughed, and looked at me. 'I've got it!' he cried. 'Yes, of course that's it. Watson, did you see any cow tracks today?'

'Yes,' I said. 'Lots of them. Everywhere.'

'And how many cows did you see on the moor?'

'I don't remember any,' I said.

'Isn't that strange, Watson? Lots of cow tracks, but no cows? And do you remember those tracks, Watson?' He took out his notebook. 'There were tracks like this:

: : : : : : : : : :

and sometimes like this:

: . : . : . : . : . : . : .

and sometimes like this:

. ' . ' . ' . ' . ' . '

Do you remember that, Watson?'

'No, I don't,' I said. 'What does it mean, Holmes?'

'It means that it's a very strange cow, Watson! Cow don't move like that. Now, let's go quietly out and have look round these stables.'

There were two tired-looking horses in the stables. Holmes looked carefully at one of the horse's feet, and laughed. 'Look, Watson. Old shoes, but new nails. Oh, this case gets more interesting every minute.'

I began to ask Holmes a question, but suddenly we heard someone behind us, and there was Mr Reuben Hayes. His face was red and angry.

'What are you doing in my stables?' he cried.

'We're just looking at your horses, Mr Hayes,' said Holmes, smiling. 'Why? Are you afraid of something?'

The man opened his mouth, then closed it quickly. His face was still red and angry. Holmes did not give him time to speak.

'I think your horses are tired, Mr Hayes. We can walk to the Hall. It's not far.'

'Three kilometres, by the road,' Mr Hayes said. His eyes still watched us angrily.

It was nearly dark when we left. We walked along the road for about a hundred metres. Then Holmes took my arm. 'Quick, Watson! Off the road and up the hill. Then we can come down the hill at the back of the inn.'

We ran up the hill. 'This man Hayes,' I said. 'He knows all about the kidnapping. Is that right, Holmes?'

'Of course it is,' he said. 'We can learn a lot more from Mr Hayes. Ah! Who's this? Watson, get down!'

There was a bicycle on the road. It came past us very quickly, and we saw the rider - Mr James Wilder, the Duke's secretary. His face was white and afraid.

'Quick, Watson!' said Holmes. 'We must watch him.'

We ran down the hill, and stopped when we could see the back door of the inn. Wilder's bicycle was by the wall near the door. For five minutes, nothing happened; then a man on a horse rode quickly out of the stables and disappeared down the road.

'What do you think of that, Watson?' said Holmes.

'Somebody's running away.'

'Yes. But not James Wilder, because there he is at the door.'

We could see Wilder in the light from the door. He stood there, looking out, and ten minutes later another man came down the road and went into the inn. Then a light came on in a room upstairs.

'Come, Watson. We must get nearer,' Holmes said.

We went down the hill and walked very quietly to the back door of the inn. The bicycle was still by the wall. Holmes looked at the wheel, and laughed quietly.

'A Dunlop tyre, Watson! Now, I must look through that upstairs window, so I need your back, Watson.'

Holmes stood on my back, but only for a second, and then he was down again. 'Come, my friend,' he said. 'It's a long walk to the school, so let's start at once. I can give you all the answers to this mystery tomorrow.'

It was a long, cold, muddy walk back to the school. I went to bed at once, but Holmes went out again, to Mackleton, I think. I was very tired, and slept all night like a dead man.

CHAPTER SIX

Sherlock Holmes Talks to the Duke

At eleven o'clock the next morning Holmes and I were in the Duke's office at Holdernesse Hall. Mr Wilder came to speak to us.

'The Duke can see no one today,' he said to Holmes.

Holmes looked at him coldly. 'The Duke can see me,' he said. 'Please tell him that I am here.'

After half an hour the Duke of Holdernesse came into the room. He looked older - tired and ill.

'Well, Mr Holmes?' he said.

Holmes looked at James Wilder. 'I can speak more freely without your secretary here, sir.'

'Very well,' said the Duke tiredly. 'Please, James...'

James Wilder gave Holmes an angry look, but he went out of the room and shut the door.

Holmes looked at the Duke. 'You are offering, I hear, five thousand pounds for news of your son.'

'True.'

'And another thousand pounds for the name of the kidnapper.'

'True.'

My friend smiled. 'I see your cheque book on the table, sir. I would like to have your cheque for six thousand pounds.'

'Mr Sherlock Holmes,' the Duke said angrily, 'what is this about? Do you have news of my son, or not?'

'Oh, yes,' said Holmes.

The Duke's eyes never left Holmes's face. 'Where is my son?' he said quietly.

'He is - or was last night - at the Green Man Inn, three kilometres along the road to Chesterfield.'

The Duke fell back in his chair.

'And the name of the kidnapper?'

Sherlock Holmes's answer was a very surprising one. 'You,' he said. 'And now, sir, your cheque, please.'

The Duke stood up, his face white and angry. Then he sat down again, and put his face in his hands. It was some minutes before he spoke.

'How much do you know?' he asked.

'I saw you with him last night,' said Holmes.

'And how many people know about this?'

'Only I and my friend here, Dr Watson.'

The Duke took out a pen, opened his cheque book, and began to write. 'When I made this offer, I didn't know...' He stopped, then began again. 'Are you and your friend going to talk about this, Mr Holmes?'

'I don't understand you, sir,' said Holmes.

'I mean... Nobody needs to know about this - this little family mystery. Just you and your friend Watson. Look, here is my cheque for twelve thousand pounds.'

Holmes gave him a cold little smile. 'I'm sorry, sir. There is a dead man in this case. You remember?'

'But that wasn't James!' cried the Duke. 'He knew nothing about it. He was very, very unhappy when he heard about the - the killing.'

'Murder,' said Holmes.

'But James wasn't there! And when he heard about it, he came to me at once, and told me everything. Oh, Mr Holmes, you must help him - you must! He is not the murderer! The murderer ran away last night.'

Holmes smiled again. 'I have a little more news for you, sir. The police met Mr Reuben Hayes

last night at Chesterfield station. Mr Hayes is not running anywhere for a very long time.'

The Duke looked at Holmes with an open mouth. 'You - you know everything!' he said. 'But I am pleased to hear about Hayes - he was always a bad man. And that news can only help James.'

'James? Your secretary?' said Holmes.

'No, sir. My son. James Wilder is my son.'

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Duke's Son

When the Duke said this, I was very surprised, but Holmes was surprised too.

'This is news to me,' he said. 'Can you tell me more?'

The Duke stood up, and walked round the room for a minute. 'I must tell you everything,' he said. 'I didn't want to talk about it, but I must. I see that now.'

He sat down again, and began his story. 'When I was a young man, Mr Holmes, I was in love - oh, so much in love. It only happens to you once, and this woman was the love of my life. I wanted her to be my wife - but she died. She left me this one child, and I loved him because of her. When I look in his face, I see her, and remember her, and can't stop loving her. I must have the boy near me because of this. But a government minister cannot tell the world about a love-child like this. So, to the world, James is my young secretary, not my son.

'He knows that I am his father. He hates the Duchess, because she is not his mother. And he

hates my younger son, Arthur, because Arthur has everything. Arthur has a name, a famous father, houses, money, everything. James has nothing. Well, he has some money, of course, but he is just Mr James Wilder, and he wants to be the Duke of Holdernesse one day. That's not possible, of course, but James can't understand that. And so, you see, I was afraid for Arthur, and that's why I sent him to Dr Huxtable's school.

'And what does James do next? He kidnaps my poor Arthur. It changes nothing, but James can't see that. He wants me to say, "Yes, James, now you can be my first son; you can have everything. Arthur can be the number two son." But I can't do that, of course I can't.

'James knew this man Hayes, you see, because Hayes worked for me once. James asked for Hayes's help, and the man was happy to do it. You remember my letter to Arthur on that last day? Well, James opened the letter and put in a note from him. That evening he cycled across the moor and met Arthur in Ragged Shaw. He talked about the Duchess, Arthur's mother. "She wants to see you," he told Arthur. "She's waiting on the moor. Come back at midnight, and a man with a horse can take you to her." Of course, poor Arthur wanted to see his mother, so he came. Hayes was there with two horses, and they rode across the moor. But the German teacher followed them, and

Hayes killed him. Hayes then took Arthur to the Green Man.

'Well, Mr Holmes, I knew nothing about any of this - until the murder. James is a bad boy, but he does not murder people. When he heard the news, he came to me at once, crying. What could I do? I didn't want the world to know about this. So James went down to the Green Man. He told Hayes to run away, because everybody knew about the murder now - and knew the murderer's name too.

Hayes left at once. Later, I went down and saw Arthur. I left him there with Mrs Hayes because I couldn't say anything to the police just then.

'So, Mr Holmes, now you know everything.'

'Mmm,' said Holmes. 'You help a murderer, you say nothing to the police, you leave your young son in a dirty inn... and you ask for my help.'

People never spoke to the Duke of Holdernesse like this usually. His face was red, but he said nothing.

'First,' said Holmes, 'we must bring Arthur home.'

'Yes,' the Duke said quietly.

Holmes quickly wrote a note and took it out of the room. A minute later, he was back. 'Now, what

are you going to do about Mr James Wilder?' he said.

'I understand you, Mr Holmes,' said the Duke. 'James is leaving me and going to Australia next week.'

'Good,' said Holmes. 'And the Duchess? Perhaps without James in the house, you and she...'

'Yes. I wrote to the Duchess this morning.'

Holmes stood up. 'Well,' he said, 'Watson and I can go home now, I think. There is just one other small thing... This man Hayes took two horses across the moor, but the horses' feet made the tracks of a cow in the mud. How was this possible?'

The Duke looked surprised and thought for a minute. Then he went away and came back two minutes later with a glass box in his hands. In the box were some horse-shoes.

'We found these shoes under the ground in the garden,' the Duke said. 'They are about five hundred years old, we think. The Holdernesse family has a long and interesting past.'

Holmes opened the box and took out one shoe. It was a shoe for a horse's foot, but it looked like a cloven cow's foot. Holmes wet his finger and

ran it round the bottom of the shoe. A little mud came off on his finger.

'Thank you,' said Holmes. He put the horse-shoe back in its box. 'That shoe is the second most interesting thing in the north of England,' he said.

'And the first?' asked the Duke.

Holmes took the cheque for twelve thousand pounds from the table, and slowly put it into his notebook. 'I am a poor man,' he said. He looked lovingly at the notebook, then put it carefully in his pocket.

- THE END -

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